



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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Navajo Nation and New Mexico Indian Affairs Department partner to raise human trafficking awareness



PHOTO: The Nez-Lizer Administration with New Mexico Secretary of Indian Affairs Lynn Trujillo at the New Mexico State Capitol in Santa Fe, N.M. on Jan. 21, 2020.

SANTA FE, N.M. – On the opening day of the New Mexico State Legislature’s session on Tuesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, First Lady Phefelia Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, 24th Navajo Nation Council members, New Mexico Indian Affairs Secretary Lynn Trujillo, and Deputy Secretary Nadine Padilla gathered at the New Mexico State Capitol in Santa Fe, N.M. on Tuesday to issue a proclamation recognizing Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

“Human trafficking is a very serious issue around the world and more so for Indigenous peoples, including New Mexico tribes. We are proud to partner with Secretary Trujillo to raise awareness throughout the state for our women and children and their families who have been affected by human trafficking. We need to continue working together to end this problem in our communities,” said President Nez, who also recognized and thanked the participants of the Diné Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Sunrise Prayer Run that are running from Flagstaff to the capital of the Navajo Nation, Window Rock, Ariz. this week.

According to the International Labor Organization, there are approximately 20.9 million victims of human trafficking globally, 26-percent of which are children and 55-percent of which are women and young girls. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported an estimated one out of six endangered runaways are likely child sex trafficking victims, and between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year.

“This issues ties in with the missing and murdered Diné relatives initiative that the Navajo Nation has raised on the national level. In November, the White House issued an executive order to help address these matters and our administration is optimistic that working together, we can return more of our Diné to their families safely by raising awareness,” said Vice President Lizer.

The Navajo Nation and New Mexico Indian Affairs Department proclaim January 2020 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month, in the name of freedom and equity of all people, and encourage education and advocacy to bring forth public awareness to the terrible injustice. We call upon law enforcement, community organizations, families, and the entire Navajo Nation to recognize the vital role we must all play to end human trafficking, states the proclamation.

“I am honored to take part in the signing of the Navajo Nation and New Mexico Indian Affairs Department proclamation recognizing January 2020 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Thank you to President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer for your efforts to combat and eliminate this epidemic. We would also like to thank First Lady Phefelia Nez for her leadership on this issue and for working as a part of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force for the State of New Mexico. I am confident that together, we can raise public awareness of human trafficking and be the strength for the powerless and the hope of the victims,” stated Secretary Trujillo.

“Throughout our country, we hear far too many stories of families and victims who experience this traumatic epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and we need to put a stop to it. Working together, we need to be proactive to protect our Indigenous women and children,” said First Lady Nez, who serves on New Mexico’s Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force with Secretary Trujillo.

Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish, who was recently appointed to serve as a member of the Navajo Nation’s Diné Nihik’ée Nihíí Násdłji (Reuniting our Relatives) Workgroup, which is led by First Lady Phefelia Nez and Second Lady Dottie Lizer.

“Human Trafficking has beset our communities for too long. Human Trafficking has claimed too many of our family members and our friends. As a newly appointed member to the Navajo Nation Diné Nihik’éeí Nihíí Násdłji (Reuniting our Relatives) Workgroup I thank our President Jonathan Nez and our leadership for working with the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department to recognize this tragedy that plagues our people,” said Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish.

Council Delegate Rickie Nez also spoke in support of the proclamation at the ceremony on behalf of the 24th Navajo Nation Council.

“It’s very difficult to imagine how it feels to be taken away from your home and your family. It’s an issue that we need to continue addressing by working with the state. I am very thankful to Secretary Trujillo for being with us today,” said Council Delegate Rickie Nez, who was also joined by Council Delegates Mark Freeland and Wilson Stewart, Jr.

The Nez-Lizer Administration established the internal workgroup known as the “Diné Nihik’éeí Nihíí’ Násdłji’: Work Group, Reunite our Diné Relatives,” to help address issues and concerns related to missing and murdered peoples and social ills impacting Navajo families, including Navajo men and boys. Most importantly, the focus is to heal, restore, and reunite Navajo families.

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THE NAVAJO NATION AND NEW MEXICO INDIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

RECOGNIZING JANUARY 2020
AS HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, the International Labor Organization estimates that there are 20.9 million victims of Human Trafficking globally, 26% of which are children and 55% of which are women and girls; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported an estimated one out of six endangered runaways are likely child sex trafficking victims, and between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that the effects of human trafficking reach far beyond its victims and perpetrators, causing disruption in our schools, places of work, and communities; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that increased awareness and education is crucial to understanding and eliminating human trafficking within the Navajo Nation; and

WHEREAS, we have compassion for the victims of human trafficking, and commend the individuals, organizations, and government entities dedicated to combating human trafficking.

NOW THEREFORE, WE, as Leaders of the Navajo Nation and New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, come together and do hereby proclaim January 2020 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month, in the name of freedom and equity of all people, and encourage education and advocacy to bring forth public awareness to the terrible injustice. We call upon law enforcement, community organizations, families, and the entire Navajo Nation to recognize the vital role we must all play to end human trafficking.

PROCLAIMED THIS 21st DAY OF JANUARY 2020

Jonathan Nez, President
THE NAVAJO NATION

Myron Lizer, Vice President
THE NAVAJO NATION

Phefelia Nez, First Lady
THE NAVAJO NATION

Lynn Trujillo, Secretary of Indian Affairs
STATE OF NEW MEXICO